



News Release



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**Contact: Richard Snelsire,
Spokesman
0300-501-2640**

Joint U.S. - Pakistan Press Release U.S. – Pakistan Strategic Dialogue On Women Empowerment

Islamabad, June 25, 2010 – As part of the U.S. – Pakistan Strategic Dialogue initiated in March, 2010 by Secretary Clinton and Foreign Minister Mr. Shah Mahmud Qureshi, Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues Melane Verveer and Special Assistant to the Prime Minister, Ms. Shahnaz Wazir Ali jointly chaired the dialogue on Women Empowerment held in Islamabad on June 24, 2010.

This is the first official dialogue between the U.S. and Pakistan focused on women's development and empowerment and seeks to identify a common agenda and activities for both countries to affirm their interest in empowering women and advancing women's rights. The Pakistan Government delegation presented the overall program for women's empowerment which was appreciated by the U.S. delegation. The discussion encompassed a range of issues including: exploring greater economic opportunities for women; political empowerment of women; addressing violence against women; provincial variations in the challenges and accomplishments for women, gender sensitization of key judicial and law enforcement agencies.

The following initiatives were discussed as potential next steps:

- 1) Developing a training program for women local leaders at the union council levels to help support capacity building and leadership training.
- 2) Exploring the use of technology to improve the lives of women and girls.
- 3) Creating programs that seek greater economic opportunities for women's technical training, entrepreneurial development, microfinance, access to domestic and international markets, and access to capital.
- 4) Supporting institutional measures for relief and rehabilitation of women victims of violence and displacement.

The US delegation appreciated the government's commitment to bring about progressive legislation for women.

These discussions were the eighth of the Strategic Dialogue working group meetings held earlier

ISLAMABAD

Diplomatic Enclave, Ramna 5
Phone: 2082000
E-mail: infoqsb@state.gov

KARACHI

Collector's Lane, 8 Abdullah Haroon Road
Phone: 5204200
E-mail: irckhi@state.gov

LAHORE

50, Empress Road
Phone: 6034000
E-mail: irclahore@state.gov

PESHAWAR

11, Hospital Road, Peshawar Cantt.
Phone: 5268800

this month which included defense, energy, water agriculture, economics and finance, market access, science and technology.

Ambassador Verveer and Ms. Shahnaz Wazir Ali along with delegation members also visited the Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women Crisis Center in Islamabad and offered to provide assistance for the center.

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